

Strengthening Human Capital in the Islam Hadhari Era through Academic Programmes in a Public University in Malaysia: A Case Study

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Introduction

his study is related to human capital issue, as mentioned by the Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi during the tabling of the 9th Malaysian Plan (Rancangan Malaysia ke-9 – RMK9 [Malaysia, 2006]). One of the main focuses in RMK-9 is the aspect related to human capital development which should be in line with the concept of *Islam Hadhari*.

The concept of *Islam Hadhari* as inspired by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, emphasises on the obligations of each and every Muslim to acquire knowledge towards making themselves into competent masters of intelligence pertinent to all areas of expertise. In addition, it is aspired that the quality human capital commodity would have the ability to identify and integrate the acquired knowledge with religious concepts as both of these entities of knowledge are unified as one constituent and not as separable aspects (Abdullah, 2004). Qualified and quality human capital is a crucial asset for the process of nation development (Altbach, 1991; Johari, 2000; Sufean, 2002).

The concept of Islam Hadhari as inspired by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, emphasises on the obligations of each and every Muslim to acquire knowledge towards bridging themselves as competent masters of intelligence pertinent to all areas of expertise.

Findings of the study show that all academic staff embed the Islamic values in their syllabus and in their teaching and learning with the purpose of exposing students to two different perspectives of academic investigation, namely secular and Islamic.

However, in order to promote the *Islam Hadhari* concept in Malaysia, educational organisations, especially the universities should offer academic programmes that can spur and help in producing quality human capital, both physically and spiritually. The fundamentals behind the aspect pertaining to quality human capital do not solely depend on the factors associated with their skills and knowledge but also correlate with their personality, attitude and moral standings (Mahayuddin, 1986).

Purpose of the Study

This study is a part of a larger study related to the issue of human capital development. The study was carried out with the purpose of investigating the relevant approaches that has been adopted by one of the public universities in Malaysia in integrating Islamic Education into its academic programmes.

Methodology

This study is based on a case study and utilised two techniques of data collection, namely interviews and document analysis. It is applied to one particular

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public university in Malaysia, involving, as the unit of analysis, the participation of seven top management personnel selected through purposive sampling from the university as respondents. For the document analysis, data triangulation technique was implemented. All documents for this process were provided by the University Planning Unit and every faculty of the university in which this study was carried out.

Findings

The establishment of the selected university in this study is mainly based on the purpose of realising the aspiration of Muslims all over the world towards being the pioneering leader of knowledge in all areas of expertise. Even though in general the university is considered Islamic, the academic programmes offered are not limited to Islamic studies. It also offers a wide range of academic programmes related to other fields such as science and technology, literature and medicine. However the uniqueness of each and every programme offered in this university is assimilated with the concept of Islamisation, whereby Islamic values are embedded in the development of the curriculum of the programme.

Findings of the study show that the university employs a varied methodology in its effort to integrate Islamic values in every academic programme pertaining to the area of studies. For example, in the area of Syariah, Revealed Knowledge and Islamic History studies, the integration is done directly since these areas of studies are related to Islamic Education. However, in fields such as science, technology and English literature, the integration is done indirectly. This integration process requires a certain amount of creativity, especially in terms of interpretation of research findings in which Islamic values are assimilated and related.

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In the process of this integration, the mission is not solely shouldered by the top level management of this university. In fact, it also involves all academic staff in every faculty. Finding shows that all academic staff embed the Islamic values in their syllabus and in their teaching and learning with the purpose of exposing students to two different perspectives of academic investigation, namely secular and Islamic. To produce students who are well-versed in skills and knowledge and to develop their attitude, moral and spiritual quality, the university also makes it compulsory for all students to attend courses based on Islamic education. Examples of such courses are Islamic Ethics, Fiq Qul-Dakwah, Islamic Worldview etc.

Conclusion

As a whole, the findings of this study demonstrate that the university has taken various initiatives to integrate Islamic Education in its academic programmes in its effort to strengthen the production of the quality of human capital pool and to produce the aspired human capital as inspired in Islam Hadhari. Furthermore, it can be said that the core focus of development of this university is not solitarily on the elements pertaining to skills and knowledge. It also emphasises on the positive development of personality, moral and spirituals component that stand as a pillar pertinent to human capital.

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